

#49



## MEMORANDUM

### Austin Police Department *Office of the Chief*

**TO:** Rudy Garza, Asst. City Manager  
**FROM:** Stan Knee, Chief of Police  
**DATE:** March 23, 2005  
**SUBJECT:** Council Briefing March 24 on PERF Recommendations

The following provides an update on the progress APD has made in implementing 18 key recommendations from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Evaluation of Recruiting and Training. Of the 18 key recommendations, 4 are fully implemented, 12 are in progress, and 2 need additional resources. A listing of our responses to all 59 recommendations is also available for your review. Of the 59 responses, 24 are completed, 28 are in progress, and 7 need additional resources.

***1. The recruiting staff should continually conduct assessments of the effectiveness of each recruiting element in light of the need to recruit candidates who can successfully complete the academy. Action: In Progress.*** In the spring just prior to Cadet graduation, Recruiting and Training staff will interview 20% of the class to determine what contributed to their success including the recruitment method that brought them to APD. In addition, the Recruiting and Training staff has implemented a semi-annual review to list attributes of successful Cadets; identify recruiting techniques that will attract applicants with these attributes; and review the recruiting activities that took place over the previous 6-months to assess success in finding strong candidates.

***8. The recruiting team should routinely and periodically conduct follow-up interviews with recent graduates of the academy to verify their suppositions about the effectiveness of various recruiting tools. The review process should also include periodic focus group discussions with representatives from various local minority communities who can provide additional insight as to the effectiveness of various recruitment strategies. Action: In Progress.*** Three months after completion of field training in January 2005, Recruiting and Training staff interviewed a random sample of 20% of the probationary officers to get their ideas on recruiting and the training Academy experience. In addition, just prior to the start of recruiting for any Academy class, recruiting staff will conduct two focus groups with community members to get their feedback on the planned recruitment strategies. The Training focus groups have been completed and this information will be considered for training the upcoming cadet class.

**17. The department should recognize the value of a highly committed training staff and that these are the individuals who will shape the future of the department, and one way to encourage quality people to apply is through the provision of compensation commensurate with responsibilities. Action: In Progress.** At present, changes in supplemental pay would require a change in the Meet and Confer contract that amends State civil service law. It is likely that the change will not be considered until the next opportunity for contract negotiations which will take place in 2007. APD will seek other methods to recognize the commitment and contributions of training staff such as the creation of a service ribbon for FTOs and Academy instructors.

**18. The PERF review of the existing training facility, the list of dysfunctional components of the existing facility, the documented expansion of training demands and the future growth of the department all clearly highlight the need for a new (or greatly enhanced) training academy. Action: Needs Resources.** APD recognizes the need to build a new training facility that will house Training and Recruiting together. Additional resources will be required to fund a new facility and preliminary cost estimates are being prepared. We anticipate requesting funds for the facility in the next bond election.

**20. Necessary administrative/clerical assistance must be provided to the academy staff so as to allow instructors and supervisors to perform the tasks required to ensure fully trained cadets. When the instructional staff is burdened with clerical duties, not integral to their duties, the quality of the instruction they provide can be expected to decline. Action: Completed.** Training has filled the vacancies in administrative staff positions. There was 1 FTE working at the time of PERF's review and there are now 2.75 FTEs working.

**22. The department should reconsider its mandate to produce a large number of cadets in one sitting. Action: In Progress.** The department will explore having more than one Cadet class each year based on the outcome of a workload analysis. In 2006, we will retain the one class per year concept.

**23. The department should continue to take advantage of every opportunity to reinforce verbal and de-escalation skills through scenario-based training. Action: Completed.** The department already reinforces verbal, de-escalation, and other critical skills through scenario-based training. The last Cadet class included approximately 40 role play exercises for each Cadet and this practice will continue and/or increase in future classes.

**25. Curriculum development should be part of a broader, more strategic process where the fundamental principle is to continually reinforce lessons from cadet training throughout an officer's career. Action: In Progress.** Training is continuing to focus on a

unified curriculum that takes into account career development, identifying and addressing core competencies for career advancement, and integrating key lessons throughout the curriculum (i.e., leadership, problem-solving, ethics and the value of diversity.)

**27. The Austin Police Department should consider developing a new civilian position that is responsible for continual evaluations of the entire training curriculum and the development of new courses and lessons. Action: Needs Resources.** APD has assigned Dr. Ronnelle Paulsen from the Planning and Analysis Division to Training to begin work on training evaluation and curriculum. The department's vision for training includes several civilian positions to 1) administer and track course and instructor evaluations; 2) maintain student and instructor records; 3) assess and design curriculum; and 4) monitor the link between evaluations, outcomes in the Guidance Advisory Program (early warning), and training development.

**33. The APD's Field Training Officers (FTOs) should receive 8 hours of annual follow-up training regarding the latest changes to procedures and practices. Action: In Progress.** In 2006, APD will begin an 8 hour annual follow-up with FTOs. Beginning this year, APD will implement a new 40-hour FTO re-certification course for current FTOs that will take place in March 2005, prior to the graduation of the next Cadet class. The new FTOs will be required to take an 80-hour Basic Field Training Officer Course also in March. All current and new FTOs must meet the new standards related to discipline, passing a written examination and having positive evaluations from peers and supervisors. Only those officers who receive approval from their own Commander and the Training Commander will be selected as FTOs. FTO Supervisors will attend a four-hour orientation course to be sure they are knowledgeable about new procedures. Finally, there is a new process to remove FTOs who cannot meet the qualifications or have been suspended from the department.

**35. The PTO [Police Training Officer] program should be strategically evaluated as a possible replacement for the current FTO program. The basis for assessment would include alignment with organizational values, long-term strategy, and objectives. Action: Completed.** APD's FTO program has been revised to include the most important elements of PTO: employing adult learning techniques, officer participation in structured community oriented policing projects, and enhanced expectations of Training Officers. The FTO training includes DR participation during the Problem Solving Project and the Neighborhood Analysis project.

**36. District Representative Officers (DRO's) should be incorporated into the standard assessment of the academy's effectiveness in preparing recruits for their job as patrol officers. Action: In Progress.** District Reps will be included at several stages in the process of recruiting, hiring, training and assessing probationary status for new officers.

**41. Where possible, the department should try to integrate use of force, communication skills, and valuing diversity into training courses that can be delivered either through electronic media or on-site lectures. Action: In Progress.** The department is currently working on integrating use of force, communication skills and diversity throughout the training curriculum. Use of force training will be integrated into annual refresher training for FTOs and into the upcoming Corporal training program. Corporals will be given a use of force lesson plan and trained by Academy staff. The corporals will, in turn, be responsible for refresher training for their shifts and they will also conduct use of force refreshers each time they train with officers on the new weapons simulator that is planned for 2006. Communication training for Cadets includes 8 hours of verbal judo, 8 hours of communication excellence, and 16 additional hours taught by APD training instructors. Diversity training for Cadets includes the Tools for Tolerance training that is also being provided to all police officers within the department.

**43. APD has an opportunity to utilize the corporal's position [for training] in a unique and organizationally needed format. Action: In Progress.** APD already uses corporals in the training process. They have provided patrol training on in-car video, pursuits, high-risk traffic stops, and Homicide In Progress Scenes (HIPS). The Corporals' formal job description will be revised to reflect these new training responsibilities.

**44. The department should place greater emphasis on its commander forums. These currently are missed opportunities for valuable two-way communication between the police and the community. Action: In Progress.** A calendar of Commander's Forum meetings for the first quarter of 2005 has been established and posted on the City website, newspapers and newsletters. Several discussion topics are being suggested to the Commanders for use in their meetings such as chapters from a recently released "Unlocking the Mysteries of Policing" report funded by a grant from the Dept. of Justice, COPS Office.

**52. The TCLEOSE Advisory Board should undertake training in the evaluation of curricula and other related courses, when appropriate. Action: In Progress.** Recognizing that the Board has not received general training on the training curriculum, the Training staff began a series of presentations in November 2004 on what is currently being offered at the Academy. This will prepare the Board to take on more proactive roles in the future.

**53. The monthly briefings provided by the academy staff to the TCLEOSE Advisory Board can be enhanced through the advance distribution of briefing notes to members of the Board. Action: Completed.** Since the November 2004 meeting, the briefing notes have been distributed to Board members prior to the start of any TCLEOSE Advisory Board meeting.

**56. The relationship between the Office of the Police Monitor and the APD should be strengthened. Action: In Progress.** In December 2004, the Police Monitor, Ashton Cumberbatch, began attending roll call meetings at the beginning of patrol shifts to introduce himself, describe what his office does and answer any questions the officers might have. These meetings will continue in 2005. Mr. Cumberbatch spent two hours with the APD command staff at a retreat in January 2005. We will continue to look for ways to improve positive and educational dialogue between the Police Monitor and APD officers.